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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 1028  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 3404  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4227  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0684  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1668  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 002299

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/ANP, INR/EAP

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [HUM](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: PAPUANS PROTEST AUTONOMY FAILURES

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Papuan students have taken to the streets in peaceful protests, charging that the implementation of the province's Special Autonomy arrangement has failed. Student leaders have called for a referendum on Special Autonomy, a demand that is steadily gathering Papuan support, but which is totally unacceptable to Jakarta. While popular protests focus on autonomy and demands for a referendum, the immediate target is the May 2007 Presidential Instruction on Papuan economic development, which so far is not delivering benefits. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On August 20, approximately 300 demonstrators rallied in front of the Papua Legislative Council (DPR-P) in Jayapura to protest what they characterized as the failure of Special Autonomy. A loose affiliation of student organizations called "The Coalition of People and Students for Papua" organized the peaceful demonstration. The students demanded that the provincial government and the DPR-P acknowledge that Special Autonomy has failed. Council members Yani (one name only) and Heny Arobaya received the demonstrators and told them to deliver their demands to the council when it was back in session. Papuan student groups also staged small rallies in front of the Department of Home Affairs and the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) in Jakarta on August 21. Police presence was restrained and there were no arrests.

¶3. (C) The demonstrators also expressed support for a referendum on Special Autonomy. The students demanded a vote over whether to continue with Special Autonomy as currently drafted or to open "direct dialogue" with Jakarta to revise the law. The Alliance of Papuan Students and the United Front of West Papuan People, the leading student organizations in the province, both voiced support for the referendum, as have many members of the Papua Tribal Council.

¶4. (C) Echoing these sentiments, DPR-P member Weynand Watory told poloff that failures in both Jakarta and Jayapura had undermined the economic redistribution strategy. While money had begun flowing from Jakarta to Jayapura, the provincial government had been unable to absorb and use the funds.

(Note: Many provincial governments, with first-time elected officials and new funds from Jakarta, are suffering from a lack of capacity to formulate, implement and monitor budgets. End note.) As a result, he charged, most was going into the pockets of local officials. Moreover, Jakarta had continued to drag its feet on implementing Special Autonomy. Jakarta elites were unwilling to cede control of Papua's enormous mineral, gas and timber resources to the provincial government, he asserted.

15. (C) As touched on by Watory, the current Papuan dissatisfaction seems to spring mainly from flaws in the new economic strategy, although it is ostensibly directed at Special Autonomy in general. Presidential Instruction 5/2007 on the Accelerated Development of Papua and West Papua Provinces (Inpres) issued in May directed 11 ministries to contribute to Papuan economic development. Papuan member of the House of Representatives (DPR) Simon Morin told poloff that people in the province regarded the Inpres as "soft recentralization." Under the instruction, as Morin interpreted it, Jakarta ministries could retain control of key economic sectors, including all of Papua's natural resource wealth. DPR-P member Watory added that the President's Office had failed to consult Papuan legislators, thereby fueling suspicions that the Inpres was yet another Jakarta stratagem designed to undermine Special Autonomy.

16. (C) GOI officials recognize that its new strategy is not working as intended, although they point fingers at Papuan provincial authorities. Ambassador Albert Matandong, Special Adviser to Coordinating Minister for Security, Politics and Law Widodo, acknowledged to poloff recently that Papuan officials were siphoning off much of the funding intended for the broader public.

17. (C) Student demonstrations are a common occurrence in Jayapura and the number of committed protesters is likely to

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remain small. That said, the widespread sentiment that the government's economic strategy has failed indicates more fundamental concerns about the Special Autonomy Law, which has been on the books since 2001 and, as of yet, has not been fully implemented. Unless the GOI and Papuan provincial authorities are able to implement the law more fully and effectively, Papuans are likely to become even more frustrated.

HUME